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LONDON AND PARIS FOR AFRICA WATCHERS. EUCOM FOR POLAD

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TAGS: [PREL](#) [PGOV](#) [PREF](#) [CD](#)
SUBJECT: CHAD 11/30 UPDATE

REF: A. N'DJAMENA 1371

[1](#)B. N'DJAMENA 1368

Classified By: Poloff John O'Leary. Reasons 1.4(b) & (d)

[1](#)1. (C) Summary. The Government of Chad remains jumpy about rumors of rebel activities. It appears that rebel forces have not withdrawn to Sudan. At a convocation of ambassadors on 11/28, Chad's Foreign Minister issued a statement about the state of war that exists between Chad and Sudan. President Deby met visiting French Prime Minister Villepin 11/30 and announced Chad's agreement in principle to international peacekeeping forces on the Chad-Sudan border. End Summary.

[1](#)2. (C) On the military front, the situation in eastern Chad has stabilized. The Chadian army holds Abeche (13,49 N; 20,49 E) and Biltine (14,32 N; 20,55 E), but rebel forces remain in areas northeast and east of Abeche, not having retreated to Sudan as they previously have done. Rumors, however, abound. One rumor today, 11/30, said that rebels had retaken Abeche; but, according to the BBC Rep in Chad, Mahamat Nouri's Union of Forces for Democracy and Development (UFDD) merely threatened to test "new weapons" on Abeche. As of 1700 hours, they had not tested new weapons on Abeche. Another rumor has the UFDD fighting against Timan Erdimi's RaFD/SCUD rebels in the vicinity of Biltine; but we have no confirmation of any such clash.

[1](#)3. (C) The Chadian government has threatened to PNG the country director of the World Food Program (WFP), as well as his the Abeche director. Apparently, the GOC blamed the base camp manager for sending out a message that Adre (13,28 N; 22,12 E) had fallen to rebels. The accusation was brought up at a Council of Ministers meeting, and President Deby reportedly was extremely angry at WFP. WFP denies that the base manager made any such statement. According to WFP, a subsequent investigation determined that a disgruntled local radio operator may have been the source of the rumor. The director and his manager have one week to leave Chad unless the UN Resident Representative is able to overturn the decision. The new French Ambassador reportedly also drew the wrath of the Presidency for having circulated last Sunday a French warden message advising that rebels might be in N'Djamena within 24 hours.

[1](#)4. (U) The WFP country director told us that the 483 tons of food looted from the WFP warehouse in Abeche were for a school feeding program. Consequently, the loss of the food will not affect WFP's refugee food distribution program.

[1](#)5. (U) At a meeting with the Diplomatic Corps yesterday, 11/29, Foreign Minister Allam-Mi explained that what Chad sees as continued aggression by Sudan through its surrogates

has placed Chad in a virtual state of war with Sudan. Allam-Mi took pains to clarify that Chad was not declaring war on Sudan, but war existed nonetheless. The Foreign Minister recited the long history of Chadian-Sudanese interaction over the border and Darfur. The Foreign Minister asked the international community to support Chad in the "legitimate defense" of its territory. He reiterated charges that Saudi Arabia is also aiding the Chadian rebels in order to impose a fundamentalist regime sympathetic to al-Qa'ida. He urged the UNHCR and the international community to move the refugee camps away from the border, both to protect the refugees from Sudanese hostility and to deflect charges that the camps are used as rear bases for Sudanese rebels.

16. (U) Chadian President Deby met French Prime Minister Villepin this afternoon and announced after the meeting that Chad accepts in principle the United Nations proposal to station peacekeepers on its side of the border with Sudan. According to reports, Deby said that Chad would consult with the African Union and the UN about the size and composition of the force, as well as its mandate. It is not clear, however, whether or not Deby will accept "Blue Hats".

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